

**Annette Ivey**  
**Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and Justice**  
**Performance Oversight Hearing Testimony**  
**Tuesday, February 27th, 2024**

**To:** DC Council Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety Chairperson Brooke Pinto, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, and Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety staff

**From:** Annette Ivey, Thurgood Marshall Academy and PAVE parent leader

**Date:** February 27th, 2024

Good afternoon Chairperson Pinto, members of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, and Committee staff. My name is Annette Ivey, and I am a Native Washingtonian, Ward 7 resident, a grandparent of a student who attends Thurgood Marshall Academy, and a parent leader with PAVE.

I am testifying today because we, as a city, must do better for all of our children and our communities. Kids need our protection and opportunities for them to learn and explore - without worrying about their safety.

I'll start by telling you about my grandson, Jayden. He was robbed on the way to school five days after the school year started. Unfortunately, there wasn't supervision outside. Jayden was, of course, extremely upset and traumatized. Earlier this month, there was another robbery, this time to his best friend - again on the way to school. Since Jayden had experienced it himself, he wanted to be there to support his friend, but it brought all of those feelings back. Can you imagine what that must feel like for him? Trying to be strong for his friend, while still dealing with the trauma he endured? He's working through it, but he is understandably distraught. This is not a fair burden for our young people to bear.

I knew I needed to do something. I've been in DC my whole life, and worked on these issues from all different vantage points for years. I understand that the budget is tight, but we need to prioritize our kids. Period.

**First: we need more programming.**

There are so many great things happening at the school, I am here today to ask you to work with other executive agencies to help build on what exists. I wrote a letter calling for more programming, especially in the morning before school. Instead of the kids waiting on the steps or around the building, couldn't we offer tutoring or homework help? TMA has weightlifting for the kids in the morning but I hope that we can add even more options. I am a flutist, the arts are what helped me understand math. Those types of programming options are what can spark learning in students. It ignites their creativity and gets them into other subjects. It makes them invested and helps the learning stick, helps them see beyond just the "right now" and helps them think about their future and what they want out of life. So please protect the budget for schools, specialized school programs, and out-of-school time programs, and make sure that there are enough partners who are trained to support additional programming for our young people.

**Second: we need more safety personnel around schools during pick up and drop off.**

That includes MPD, but should also include Safe Passage Workers and school leadership. They all need to be working together and coordinating so communication is strong and our kids feel like they have a protective shield wrapped around them. They need to know and understand what is going on with young people to be able to respond and keep them safe. The police cannot do that on their own, but they can do that if they are connected to the school systems. Let's make that change in our policy so the practice can follow.

**In closing, we must approach this work with urgency, a targeted strategy, and do it in community with schools and young people.**

We need a combination of prevention, intervention, and legislation. The crime bill alone won't keep our kids safe on their way to and from and while they are at school. Legislation is easy to write, the question is about implementation. THAT is the hard part. We want to help you IMPLEMENT.

We can't just watch kids, we need to develop relationships with them - and that doesn't require more in the budget. Develop TRUST. That is the key word! If you fix it at the schools, it will reverberate into things and areas outside of the school.



We don't need a brand new budget, we need to keep building on the relationships and investments that we already have to meet these goals. We can reimagine safety: consider additional investments like youth-only metro routes with Safe Passage Workers and WMATA PD stationed on during school arrival and dismissal times, more training for law enforcement (both MPD beat cops and School Resource Officers), and better programming options for kids.

We want the city to be successful. It's not just about football or basketball teams winning and bringing in revenue. We need to see the big picture: how all of the things that are an issue with our young people, we can help you make them successful. We need to make sure students aren't only focusing on what they are doing now, but what they want to do in the future. Our students being successful makes YOU successful, and allows DC to thrive. It is a win-win for the next generation and every generation after. This isn't just about my grandson. This is about ALL of these children, and we CAN do this if we do it together.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I welcome any questions.

Sincerely,  
Annette Ivey, Ward 7 Parent Leader